

Book Review

"THE BUTTERFLIES OF MALAWI"

By

D. Gifford

1965. Society of Malawi. Price 50/- Shs.

This small book of one hundred and thirty-six pages deals with all the five hundred odd species of butterflies recorded from Malawi in an admirably clear and concise fashion. The book is constructed as a running key which will enable Lepidopterists to identify most of the species mentioned with little trouble. All original references are given, as well as type localities, synonymy (for Malawi only), distribution and habitat in Malawi and food plants when known. Descriptive material has been kept down to a minimum for obvious reasons of economy, but the characters on which the key is based are adequate for the identification of the majority of species.

Classification and nomenclature are in accordance with the most recent published work and there is a full bibliography which occupies the last nineteen pages of the book. There are nine plates in full colour, illustrating one hundred and forty species.

As Sir Malcolm Barrow points out in his foreword, although comprehensive works have been published on the butterflies of South Africa, Rhodesia, Kenya and Uganda, no such works exist on the very rich butterfly fauna of the intervening areas and the present work will help to fill a gap of long standing in the literature.

The value of the book would have been enhanced at little extra cost by the addition of a few halftone plates and of more information on the general distribution of the species.

"The Butterflies of Malawi", as well as being an important contribution to our knowledge of African butterflies will be of the greatest value to the intelligent amateur.

R.H.C.